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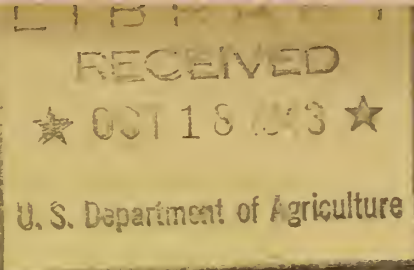
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Cap. 2

THE SCHOOL LUNCH PROGRAM



Broadcast by Norman Leon Gold, Chief, Civilian Requirements Branch, Food Distribution Administration, Wednesday, October 13, 1943, in the Department of Agriculture's portion of the National Farm and Home Hour over stations associated with the Blue Network.

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VAN DEMAN: Last spring the War Food Administration announced important changes in the school lunch program. Under the new program, the local sponsors carry more responsibility for procuring food supplies. The Federal Government provides financial assistance but no longer ships in food except in case of a special need. Now that the new school year is well started, the War Food Administration is able to see how the new school lunch program is going. We're going to hear about that from the man responsible for administration of the federal part of the program. He is Norman Leon Gold, Chief of the Civilian Requirements Branch of Food Distribution Administration. All right, Dr. Gold---

The School Lunch Program is receiving friendly support everywhere. Educators, from top officials in national and State Government to teachers in the smallest rural schools, value the School Lunch Program because they know how important good nutrition is to children, and how it helps improve ability to learn. Health authorities value the School Lunch Program because they know that good food helps maintain good health. These days, with a shortage of doctors and nurses, they want to keep ills--even MINOR ailments like common colds--at a minimum. Business men approve of the School Lunch Program because local channels are used for distributing the funds and the food. Local communities like the School Lunch Program because, while it IS a community job, they get help from the national Government when they need it to assure its success.

Let's go back a moment and see what these groups are doing to show their approval. I'm sure you will realize it is more than lip service to a worthwhile program.

National Educational Groups are unanimous in their approval. They have spent time and money to prove to their own satisfaction that a well-fed pupil is a BETTER student--and by well-fed I don't mean a person who eats a lot of food, but I mean a person who eats ENOUGH of the RIGHT KIND of food. The ability to learn is closely related to the kind of food a child eats--for food feeds the brain as well as the rest of the body.

Connected with this is the unanimous approval of the School Lunch Program by National Health Organizations. THEY maintain that it takes a healthy pupil to be a good student--and have spent time and money to prove it. Good nutrition is one of the first steps in maintaining good health. A child who is ill in body cannot concentrate on his studies. Hundreds of cases have been called to our attention in which the installation of a School Lunch Program has bettered the health record of an entire school. In a mid-west State the people of one area tried a very interesting experiment. The School Lunch Program was installed in ten schools; in ten similar schools it was not. Attendance records show that, in the ten schools which had School Lunches, absenteeism due to colds and minor ills was cut down by 13 percent. No difference was noted in the ten schools which did NOT have School Lunch Programs.

We are particularly gratified at the support State Departments of Education are lending to the School Lunch Program. In thirty-five States we have working agreements with State Departments of Education whereby they aid in supervising the program. Some of these States have made money available for a full-time staff to work exclusively in School Lunch operations. In other States qualified personnel from the Departments of Education, Health and Welfare are assigned to the program on a part-time basis. Fifteen States have set aside money to supplement that furnished by the Federal Government. A million and a half dollars has been appropriated in the State of Illinois; \$600,000 dollars in Oklahoma; and it ranges all the way down to a few thousand dollars in some of these 15 States.

And the money comes from various sources. Some of it is appropriated from the general fund; some comes from the Governor's emergency fund; and some from special taxes, such as the State Liquor Tax in Utah which will benefit the School Lunch Program this year by \$400,000. All these amounts are in addition to the contributions by local sponsoring organizations.

Many States and local Governments are coming to recognize a good meal at noon as a part of the regular educational program, just as all of them have come to recognize physical education as a necessary part of the school curriculum. The Federal Government is now encouraging them and assisting them financially within the limits of the money available, and will continue to do so until the States can carry the entire load themselves. Here indeed is a program that is being taken up by the States and communities just as fast as it is humanly possible.

That's why local communities approve the School Lunch Program as it is being administered now. This is a community job; it's success depends upon local people. But, in these days when money is needed for so many things to help further the war effort, many communities can't shoulder the entire financial burden, particularly of getting a program established. So they get State and Federal aid to assure the success of that program.

Local business men approve of the School Lunch Program because everything goes through local trade channels. The State or Federal money which assists the community program is handled by local organizations; the food is bought locally, so the storekeepers and farmers in that territory receive the money.

I can't close without mentioning the volunteer workers who contribute so much to the operation of School Lunches. It takes a pretty unselfish person to work several hours a day at planning, cooking, serving those School Lunches, and then washing up the dirty dishes. This, on top of doing all the work in their own homes. How do these women feel about it? Let me read you an excerpt from one of the many approving letters written by volunteer School Lunch workers.

"That jostling line of eager children is the climax of the day. It's a magic that always works if we let it... and tips the scales in their favor every time."

"In a world so bent on destruction we count it a privilege to be allowed to do our part in building strong bodies for the future."

VAN DEMAN: In this report on the school lunch program, you've heard Norman Gold of the War Food Administration. As he pointed out, many schools need volunteer help in the kitchens and cafeterias. If you can help, please get in touch with the local sponsors of the lunch program in a school near your home.